

LA
6315

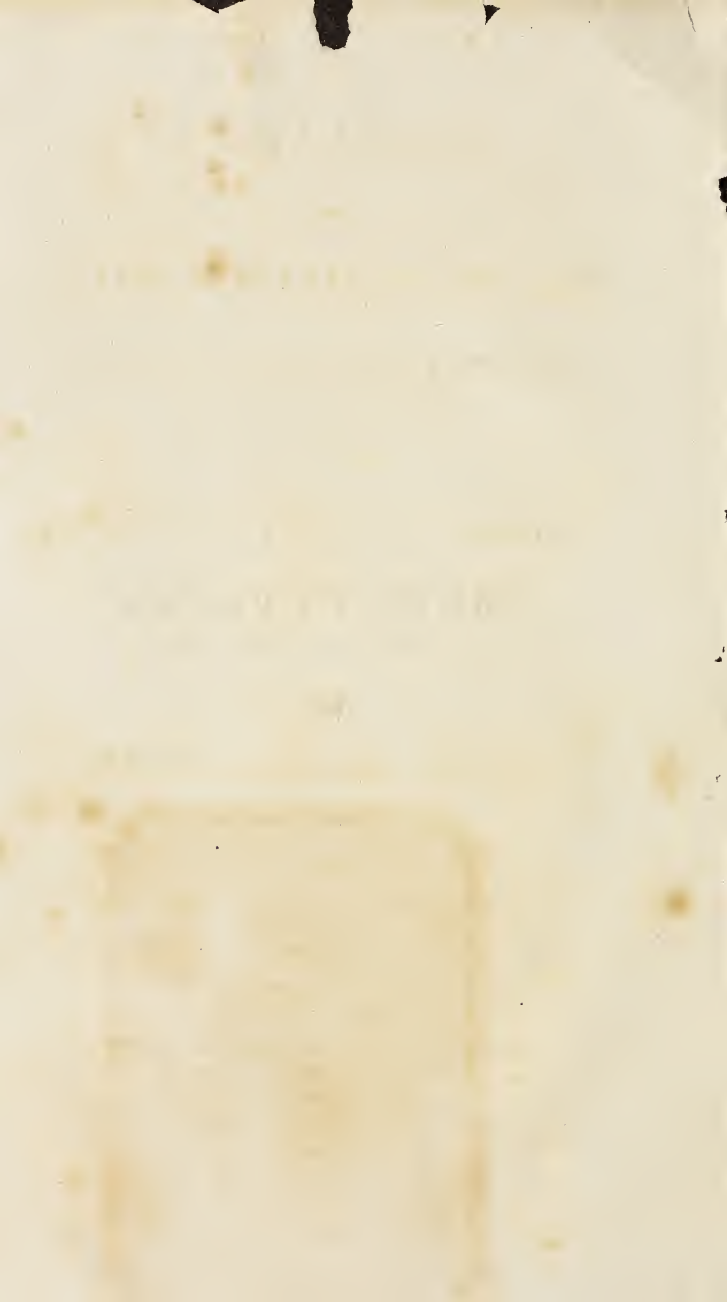
014

1821

CURR HIST

OBSERVATIONS,

&c.



OBSERVATIONS
ON
MR. BROUGHAM'S BILL
"FOR BETTER PROVIDING THE MEANS OF EDUCATION
FOR HIS MAJESTY'S SUBJECTS;"
SHEWING ITS
INADEQUACY TO THE END PROPOSED,
AND THE
DANGER WHICH WILL ARISE FROM IT
TO THE
CAUSE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

London:

PRINTED BY T. BENSLEY,
4, Crane Court, Fleet Street.

PUBLISHED BY BALDWIN, CRADOCK, AND JOY, PATERNOSTER-ROW;
T. HAMILTON, PATERNOSTER-ROW;
AND JOHN AND ARTHUR ARCH, CORNHILL.

1821.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

OBSERVATIONS,

&c.

IT is generally understood to be Mr. Brougham's intention immediately to proceed with his Bill for the Education of the Poor. A numerous body in this country—the Protestant Dissenters—feel very warmly interested in favour of the professed object of this measure, yet view the means by which it is to be accomplished, with considerable alarm; they are persuaded, on calm and deliberate reflection, that the proposed plan is essentially defective, and if adopted will retard rather than accelerate the progress of education; that it will be highly injurious to the interests of religious freedom; and, in its practical operation, prove to thousands of our fellow countrymen, a source of bitter persecution.

Unquestionably, the exertions of private individuals; and of public associations, to promote the education of the poor, unaided by parliamentary support, must to a certain degree be defective, and the Protestant Dissenters would unfeignedly rejoice at the adoption of any legislative act, that would pro-

vide the means of obtaining knowledge for the great mass of the labouring population; but a measure, intended for universal operation, ought to be founded on enlarged and liberal views; with reference to the general feelings of society, and the habits of the poor; without violating the rights of any part of the community, or furnishing to the powerful the means of oppressing the weak.

It is the intention of these observations to show, that the proposed enactment is greatly defective in these important features:

First—It has not sufficient regard to the advantages which result from the co-operation of the public, or to the habits of those classes whom the measure is intended to benefit, while it cannot fail materially to injure the schools for the education of the poor which are already in existence, and have been productive of such important benefits to the country at large.

There are throughout the kingdom numerous individuals, who, from motives of disinterested benevolence, are actively associated in committees for the management of schools for children of the labouring classes. These persons, who are well acquainted with the habits of the poor, well know that it is not the mere establishment of schools, however unobjectionable they may be in their nature, that will ensure the full attendance of scholars. The poor at large, as they respect this question, may be divided into two classes:—Those parents who, justly appreciating the

value of knowledge, are desirous of extending its blessings to their families:—Others again, who, from the neglect of their own education, and other causes, are lamentably indifferent as to its importance—require the persevering labours of the most unwearied benevolence—and must be urged to the instruction of their children by every motive that kindness can offer, or interest suggest.

Now it is probable, that were the schools proposed to be established by this Bill, *unexceptionable in other respects*, many, if not most, of the children in the first class, would derive instruction from them. But what provisions does it contain to procure the attendance of the second class—those whose parents are insensible of the benefits of education, and of course will not make any sacrifice to obtain it?

It is in vain that attempts are made to procure the attendance of the child, unless the interest of the parent in favour of education be excited; and it is only by the operation of school-committees, in visiting the poor at their own dwellings, that this important object can be obtained. Many hundreds of children in this metropolis, and in other large cities, are precluded from the advantages of instruction by the want of clothing; and it frequently occurs that, on the discovery of such cases, funds are raised by the benevolence of the neighbourhood, in order to provide for the wants of these necessitous objects. Thus many families participate in the benefits of schools, who, but for the domiciliary visits of school-committees, would never enter them, but be doomed

to perpetual ignorance, and abandoned to criminal pursuits. The assiduity and arrangements necessary to obtain this end, warrant the assertion, that unless other measures than the mere provision and support of schools be adopted, this Bill will be, to an immense body of the least instructed of the rising generation, altogether a dead letter.

It is well known that thousands of children, especially in the manufacturing districts, are industriously engaged at work during the week, and would remain in a state of entire ignorance, but for the benefits they derive from Sunday Schools; yet in a great national measure, professing to provide for universal instruction, these useful institutions are entirely overlooked. These omissions are surely contrary to the very purport of the Bill itself. In an enactment "for the better providing the means of education for his Majesty's subjects," it would scarcely have been expected that no provision would be made for the instruction of a class, which, being the most destitute of opportunity and means, must the most need its support and assistance. It is not likely, should the Act now under consideration unhappily pass, that the supporters of Sunday Schools, or the committees of existing Day Schools, would forsake the destitute and ignorant classes of poor children whom this Bill will virtually abandon; but the difficulty of maintaining their respective institutions, severely as it is now felt, will be obviously and essentially increased. The burthensome nature and effect of the poor-rate is already a subject of just and general complaint, and the mode by which this Bill proposes to raise funds for the esta-

blishment and support of schools, will add materially to the grievance. In the present times of severe pressure, a housekeeper, finding himself compelled to contribute to a school-rate, will be inclined to withdraw his subscription to a school-charity; and those who from benevolent motives may continue their voluntary aid, will be in the situation of the Dissenter who is forced to contribute to the support of the national Church, while from a sense of duty he must maintain his own. Thus not only will the Bill exclude many needy objects from its influence, but at the same time impede every exertion which the friends to universal education might wish to make, to supply its deficiencies, and remedy its defects.

In effecting a measure of such vast magnitude and importance as the universal education of the poor, it is not the supply of funds, however ample, that is alone necessary. A powerful exertion of mind and energy is requisite on the part of the middle-classes in society, to give effect to the intentions of the Legislature.—*In most countries, the difficulty is in raising such a power for carrying into execution legislative plans of moral improvement; here, it is already in full action, perfectly available, and requires only the pecuniary support of Parliament to give it complete effect.* Parliament has, in its conduct towards Ireland, acknowledged the influence of public Associations, in directing the application of its funds for this object, by the grants that are annually made to the Board of Education in that country; and the important advantages of extending such aid to public institutions is still more obvious, when we look at the rapid progress

of moral improvement in France. Annual and liberal pecuniary grants are voted by the French Government to the Society for establishing elementary schools throughout that kingdom, and in which are instructed Catholics and Protestants. The success of this enlightened co-operation between the legislature and the public, to promote the education of the poor, will be seen when it is known, that in four years there have been no less than fifteen hundred schools established in that country. The system of instruction which receives the powerful patronage and warm support of the Government of France is so liberal in its basis, as to embrace the education of every subject, without distinction.

The most magnificent exertions that were ever made for the religious improvement of a people, have been exhibited, in modern times, by the distribution of the Bible; and it will be generally admitted, that the universal circulation of the sacred volume could alone have been achieved by the middle-classes of society, in conjunction with the superior orders of the poor. Is it wise then to throw aside the means which the public possess, for securing the object of this measure, and which they have proved themselves to be well qualified to exercise? We earnestly contend that the Bill has no tendency to ensure the instruction of the most ignorant and neglected; and that the effect of it will be to deprive those who are now most active in promoting education, of all interest in filling the schools, or maintaining their prosperity.

Secondly—the Bill proposes means for the good

government of the schools, inadequate to the end, and places great additional power in the hands of the Clergy and Dignitaries of the Church, while it provides no adequate check on its abuse.

It appears that the schools to be established, are to be placed under ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The public will be compelled to support them, but from all share in their management they are excluded. No account is even to be rendered to the public of the proficiency of the scholars, or the application of the funds. The following are the words of the Act:

“And be it further enacted, by the authority afore-
 “said, that the Ordinary of any Diocese wherein
 “any school to be provided under this Act, either on
 “complaint, or on application, shall be situated, *may*
 “*from time to time as he shall see fit*, visit such school
 “either by himself in person, or by directing the
 “Archdeacon of such Diocese to visit the said school,
 “or by directing the Chancellor of the said Diocese
 “to visit the said school, and may visit any such
 “school within any Deanery in the said Diocese, by
 “directing the Dean of such Deanery to visit the same:
 “which Archdeacon, Chancellor, and Dean, are here-
 “by empowered and required, when so directed by
 “such Ordinary to hold such visitation at the time or
 “times by him specified; and the Ordinary so visit-
 “ing in person, or the Archdeacon, Chancellor, or
 “Dean, so directed by him to visit, shall have the
 “power and authority *to examine all matters touching*
 “*the said school*, and the conduct of the master there-
 “of, and to rebuke and admonish him *according to his*

“ *discretion* ; and if he see cause, *to remove him from*
 “ *his office of master.* *

“ And be it further enacted, that the Rector, Vicar,
 “ perpetual Curate, Curate, or other Minister of any
 “ parish or chapelry, whether residing and officiating
 “ or not, may at all times freely enter any school pro-
 “ vided under this Act, either on complaint or on ap-
 “ plication, within the same, or for the use of the same
 “ jointly with any other parish or chapelry, and may
 “ examine the scholars attending the same, touching
 “ their proficiency ; and may question the master
 “ touching his government of the school, and touching
 “ the proficiency of the children : and such Rector,
 “ Vicar, perpetual Curate, Curate, or other Minister,
 “ shall answer any inquiries directed to him touching
 “ the said school, by, or by order of the Ordinary of
 “ the Diocese wherein such parish or chapelry is
 “ situated. †

“ And be it further enacted, that from and after the
 “ passing of this Act, all Bishops and Archbishops
 “ who are required by an Act made in the Forty-third
 “ year of his late Majesty, intituled ‘An Act to amend
 “ the laws relating to spiritual persons holding of
 “ farms, and for enforcing the residence of spiritual
 “ persons on their benefices in England ;’ and by
 “ another Act made in the fifty-seventh year of his
 “ late Majesty intituled ‘An Act to consolidate
 “ and amend the laws relating to spiritual persons
 “ holding of farms, and for enforcing the residence
 “ of spiritual persons on their benefices ; and for the

* Vide Act, page 13.

† Vide Act, page 14.

“ support and maintenance of stipendiary Curates
 “ in England;’ to make returns every year of ‘ mat-
 “ ters connected with the residence of the clergy
 “ under their care;’ shall in addition to such returns,
 “ and in the body of the same, further make a re-
 “ turn yearly, specifying the names of all schoolmas-
 “ ters in any way appointed under this Act, within
 “ their care, together with the number of scholars
 “ taught by each, and the amount of the salary, and
 “ average yearly emoluments received by each such
 “ master; and shall add thereunto such remarks
 “ touching the said schools, and the education of
 “ youth generally, as may be from time to time com-
 “ municated by the ministers within whose parishes
 “ or chapelries such schools are situated.” *

These important clauses confer the sole right of visitation on the Parish Minister, the Ordinary, and Diocesan Dignitaries. To this exclusion from public direction and control—this removal from the salutary check of public opinion—the Dissenters entertain strong and decided objections.—Nor are these objections founded on a feeling of resentment at being deprived of the paltry importance which a share in the management of a parish school can bestow, neither in hostility or prejudice to those to whom it is proposed to commit the power; but on a firm conviction that if the schools have not the benefit of public government and control, they will not be regarded with interest by the public, and must fail to ensure the benefits which they would otherwise produce. What melancholy proofs, in confirmation of this opinion, does not the history of many institutions

* Page 15 of the Act.

present? From what have arisen the feebleness of management, the contracted usefulness, the entire perversion, of those endowed establishments, whose abuses have been so recently exposed? The greater number of these institutions have had visitors; and those, in most cases, chosen from the very order of persons selected by this Bill. Had such establishments been superintended by committees, chosen annually, and selected, as is generally the case in elections of this nature, for respectability of character, and disinterested benevolence, most of these decayed establishments would probably to the present hour have maintained their usefulness. Their fate affords a striking instance of the extreme folly of committing and bequeathing charitable institutions to *official management*; as if the office would inspire the individual who fills it with the necessary qualification for the trust. In former times, indeed, the power and advantages of public associations, for benevolent purposes, were comparatively but little known; but, in the present day, when their superiority is so strikingly manifest, to pass over the benefits to be derived from them, as the Bill in question altogether does, and to commit the objects of its care to the official superintendence of the Minister of the Parish, subject only to the Ordinary, and Dignitaries of the Diocese, appears to be altogether at variance with the experience which recent discoveries in charitable abuses furnish, with good policy, and with common sense.

In no instances have the advantages of public committees been more obvious, than in the government of schools, and other institutions, calculated to promote the moral and religious welfare of the people.

Let the effects which have resulted from such management be compared with those arising from official superintendence; and it will be found that where public committees direct, there is spirit, energy, and a strong sense of accountableness to public opinion.—Where the power is entrusted to an individual by virtue of his office, (honorable exceptions undoubtedly exist) indifference to the objects of the institution is strikingly apparent.—Would the British and National Systems of Instruction have found their way into every populous town in the kingdom, and been instrumental in training up thousands in virtue and intelligence? Would Sunday Schools have spread their moral benefits throughout the land? Would the Bible have travelled into every village? Would the country have derived these blessings, had the Legislature merely passed a bill for the enactment of these great objects, and referred the execution of it to the Clergy?

Thirdly—Is not the measure founded on principles calculated to aggrieve and oppress a large proportion of the community?

The following are the words of the Act relative to the instruction to be communicated to the children in these schools.

“ And be it further enacted, that in every school
 “ to be provided under this Act, the master thereof
 “ shall diligently teach the Holy Scriptures in the
 “ version authorized and appointed by law to be used
 “ in churches, to such scholars as be of age to learn

“ the same, and shall use *select passages* thereof for
 “ lessons, whereby to teach reading and writing, and
 “ shall teach no other book of religion, *nor from any*
 “ *other book of religion whatever*, (except as herein-
 “ after excepted) *without consent of the resident offi-*
 “ *ciating Minister of the parish or chapelry, where such*
 “ *school is held, first had and obtained*; and shall use
 “ no form of prayer or worship in the said school, ex-
 “ cept the Lord’s prayer, or *other select passage* of
 “ the Holy Scriptures, in the version aforesaid: Pro-
 “ vided always, that it shall and may be lawful for
 “ the said resident officiating Minister to direct, from
 “ time to time, *what portions* of Scripture shall be
 “ used, *either for lessons or for worship* in the said
 “ school, which direction the said master is hereby
 “ required to follow.

“ Provided nevertheless, and it is hereby further
 “ enacted, that in each school to be provided under
 “ this Act, the catechism of the Church of England as
 “ by law established, together with such portions of
 “ the liturgy thereof, as the resident officiating Minis-
 “ ter of the parish or chapelry where such school is
 “ situated may appoint, shall be taught during the
 “ half of the school hours of one day in the week,
 “ to be fixed by the said Minister when he fixes the
 “ hours of teaching, as herein before directed; and the
 “ said Minister is hereby further empowered, if he
 “ sees occasion, to order the said master to teach the
 “ catechism and portions of the liturgy, aforesaid, on
 “ the evenings of the Lord’s day, during a time not
 “ exceeding three hours. Provided always, and it
 “ is hereby expressly ordered and commanded, that

“ if any parent or guardian or other person having
 “ the care of any scholar attending such school, shall
 “ notify to the master thereof, that he or she desires
 “ such scholars may not attend on the days and at the
 “ hours when such catechism or portions of liturgy
 “ are taught as aforesaid, such scholar shall not in
 “ any manner of way be obliged to attend at such
 “ days and hours, nor punished, rebuked, or other-
 “ wise chastised or molested for not attending.

“ And be it further enacted, that the scholars of
 “ every school to be provided under this Act, shall
 “ attend the divine service of the Church of Eng-
 “ land, as by law established, under the care and in
 “ the charge of the master thereof, once every Lord’s
 “ day, in the church or chapel of the parish or cha-
 “ pelry wherein such school is situated, or in some
 “ other parish or chapelry joined with the same, in
 “ the complaint to the Justices at the Quarter Ses-
 “ sions, and their order thereupon, *unless he be satis-*
 “ *fied* that they do attend such worship under the
 “ care of their parents, guardians, or other persons
 “ having the charge or care of them: Provided never-
 “ theless, and it is hereby expressly ordered and
 “ commanded, that if any parent, guardian, or other
 “ person having charge or care of any scholar, shall
 “ notify to the said master that he or she desires
 “ such scholar not to attend the worship of the
 “ Church of England as by law established, but will
 “ take care that the said scholar attends some other
 “ place of Christian worship; such scholar shall in
 “ no wise be obliged to attend the public worship of
 “ the Church of England established as aforesaid,

“ with the said master, nor be punished, rebuked,
 “ admonished, or in any manner molested for not
 “ attending the same.”—

The provisions in the clauses affecting to protect the interests of the Dissenters, are very specious, but we will endeavour to shew that the practical effect of the whole plan will be most mischievous.

That measure is essentially bad which places the interests of the poor in opposition to their duties. It is of the highest importance that even the humblest of our fellow-creatures should be encouraged to form and cherish his own religious convictions, and profess them openly, without fear of molestation; and surely that conduct is nothing short of absolute persecution that would impose obstructions, in any shape, to the free enjoyment of this inalienable right. The sufferings of the poor are sufficiently severe, without depriving them of those consolations which flow from the uninterrupted exercise of religious profession. Numerous are the hardships, even in this land of liberty, and in the nineteenth century, which the poor, in country villages, frequently endure for conscience sake. A Dissenting meeting-house, or school, upon the British or Sunday School system, is perhaps established. The pious labourer is conscientiously desirous of attending the worship of the one, and of sending his children for instruction to the other. In doing so, he incurs the displeasure of his clergyman, whose intimacy perhaps with the wealthy of the neighbourhood renders his power more formidable. Their countenance is withdrawn,—his employment is endangered, and sometimes

lost.—Parochial relief, should he require it, is with difficulty obtained, or altogether withheld.—From participation in village charities, his family is excluded, and all these injuries he sustains, because, acting as an honest man, he obeys the dictates of religious conviction. Cases of this kind frequently occur in every county, and some have taken place within the writer's own knowledge. In a populous parish in London, an attempt was lately made to withhold parochial relief from a family because the children attended the British and not the National School; and in a large village near the Metropolis, *where the clergyman is the magistrate*, the poor have been threatened with similar privations for this offence. Not long since, several boys were actually dismissed from a National School, because the parents, after taking them to attend the regular worship of the Established Church on the Sunday, sent their children in the evening to a Dissenting meeting-house. In the immediate vicinity of town, a subscription was not long since raised for supplying bread to the necessitous families resident in the village; and, on the suggestion of the Rector, the parents, whose children attended the Dissenting meeting and Sunday School, were to be excluded from the benefit. The proposal, having been made in an opulent village, the residence of persons of several religious denominations, was over-ruled; but, had the circumstance occurred in an obscure place, there is little doubt but that its injustice must have been endured.

But it may be said, "In what respect will this Bill increase the clergyman's power of exercising oppres-

sion?"—Simply thus:—The first effect of the measure will be to reduce materially the number of Schools now in existence, supported by voluntary contributions. In a village, for instance, in which is already a Day School, on the British plan, and a Sunday School, such schools will, after the passing of this Act, be no longer considered necessary by the supporters, who, deceived as to the real effect of the schools to be established, and compelled to contribute to their maintenance, will withdraw their voluntary subscriptions. The Dissenter residing in such a village has no alternative: he must send his child to the "established" school, or deprive him of education. There are many evils to which both parent and child will be exposed, which the Act does not contemplate, and which would not come within the cognizance of the Ordinary, or Dignitary of the Diocese. The parish Minister has, under certain rules, the power of sending children gratuitously to the school: these free admissions he may choose to confine to the children of Churchmen. He has the right of examining the children at the School. He is also authorized to give his sanction to the introduction of any book of religion which he may think proper. It is perfectly well known what bearing these examinations and the instruction from such books may be made to produce on the child's religious belief. For these grievances, besides many others, the parent has no remedy: but let us imagine a very possible case—an instance of *gross* aggression, such as would constitute a violation of the Act. Suppose the corporal punishment of a child for refusing to learn the catechism, or attend the parish church. What is the legal course for the parent

to adopt? He applies, in the first place, to the parish Minister, who may be the author of the oppression: from him, therefore, he can expect no redress. His legal remedy is then to appeal to the Ordinary, who may, says the Act, "*from time to time as he shall see fit*, visit such school either by himself in person, or by directing," the Archdeacon, Chancellor, Dean, &c. &c. to do so. It is not intended to convey any reflection on the office of Ordinary, or on the character of those gentlemen who fill it, when we venture to suspect, that the cases would not be very numerous where the Ordinary would "*see fit*" to make a formal visitation, or hold a visitation of the Dignitaries of the Diocese, on the petition of an humble and obscure village labourer, complaining of the conduct of his parish Minister. *Observe, there are no means of redress whatever, should the Ordinary refuse or neglect to institute inquiry*; but let us admit, for the sake of argument, what is not very likely to occur, that investigation would always follow complaint, and that it as uniformly terminated in favour of the villager. Is the contest in no way likely to be injurious to his interests? Will he be in the same situation—will he reside with the same advantages in his village, enjoying the favour of the clergyman and the opulent of the neighbourhood, on whom probably depend his employment, and the subsistence of his family? No. Such a contention would be ruinous. This right of appeal, then, to the Ordinary—the only legal remedy which the Bill provides—would produce one of two effects. If exercised, it could scarcely fail materially to injure the appellant: Or it would induce the poor man to suffer oppression, and violate his conscience,

rather than reduce himself and family to beggary, by attempting to gain redress. It is always painful to be obliged to speak in terms of distrust of any general order of men, and particularly of a body like the clergy, among whom are so many bright examples of piety, learning, and benevolence. It is admitted that the objections now urged, are founded on the conviction that the power extended will be abused; but this mode of reasoning is fully justified by the prevailing disposition of the clergy, to visit non-conformity with their displeasure; by the increase of influence which the present Bill proposes to give them, and the absence of any adequate check to prevent or redress its abuse.

The reader's attention is now requested to that part of the Bill, by which it is enacted, in the following terms, that the school-master must be a member of the Church of England.

“ Provided further, and it is hereby enacted, that
 “ the Rector, Vicar, or perpetual Curate residing, or
 “ the Curate or other resident officiating Minister,
 “ shall have the power to call before him the person
 “ chosen and reported to him by the senior church
 “ or chapel warden as aforesaid, and to examine him
 “ touching his fitness for the place of school-master,
 “ and shall not approve of him for such master, *unless*
 “ *he be satisfied that he is a member of the Church of*
 “ *England as by law established*: Provided also, that
 “ it shall and may be lawful for the meeting of house-
 “ holders assembled as aforesaid to choose, and for
 “ the resident officiating Minister to approve as

“ school-master under this *Act*, the clerk of the parish
 “ or chapelry within which the school is situated, for
 “ which a master is wanted, or the parish or chapel
 “ clerk of any of the other parishes or chapels with
 “ which such school is joined, under the provision
 “ of this *Act*.”

Against the principle involved in this clause, every Dissenter from the Church establishment has a right most solemnly to protest. If the schools to be established were to be supported at the expense of any one sect, and confined to the education of the children of its members, then indeed the election of a master, might, with some appearance of reason, be so restricted; but in a general measure for the instruction of all, in which not only the interests, but the feelings, of all should be consulted, can such an exclusive principle be recognized by the legislature, without the grossest violation of justice? What is the only inference that can be drawn from this clause? Why, that all individuals, not members of the National Church, are unworthy of being entrusted with the education of the children of their fellow-citizens, or with the management of schools at which even their own children are expected to attend; and this unjust principle is now to be enforced, after the office of schoolmaster has been for so many years, and in such numerous instances, filled by Dissenters, with advantage to society.

We live in times, when conformity to the Established Church is no longer considered as a necessary test of attachment to the Constitution, or of allegiance to the Throne; when on the grounds of

expediency, as well as justice, we have a right to look for the repeal of those obnoxious statutes, which inflict civil disabilities for the exercise of religious profession, and the continuance of which is regarded by most enlightened Churchmen, as a disgrace to the laws, and a severe reflection on our national character. In the present day, when the Protestant Dissenters form so large a portion of the population; when their love to their country, and attachment to its institutions are not questioned; when their zeal in advancing the improvement and happiness of their fellow-subjects is generally acknowledged; at such a period, will the Parliament of England sanction and act upon a principle so odious, as to exclude, for mere difference of religious opinion, from the situation of parish school-master, a valuable class of men who have already filled, and proved their qualifications for, the office? The tests already imposed were framed at periods when the rights of conscience were but imperfectly understood. They are sufficiently grievous without the religious profession of the Non-conformist being again impugned, and his worldly advancement still further impeded. And yet, because the Dissenters feel alarmed at this threatened invasion of their privileges—at this addition to the number of their present disabilities—at this attempt to narrow the charter of their liberties;—because they temperately protest against a measure—the bare proposal of which is a public insult to their principles, and the operation of which will prove most oppressive—they have been stigmatised as restless disturbers, anxious to excite clamour, and prevent the adoption of a public benefit. The

Dissenters repel the imputation.—They had hoped that the general character of their body would have secured them from it, and they confidently ask whether their conduct since the introduction of this measure has not proved the falsehood of the charge? Some months have now elapsed since the Bill was brought forward, and they instantly expressed their decided repugnance to its main features, and their determination to oppose it; yet, in order to afford time to confer with the mover, and influenced by the hope of inducing him to withdraw the Bill, they not only abstained from holding Public Meetings, or preparing Petitions, but sent forth a circular, tending to moderate the alarm which the measure had excited; nor is it until all hopes of its abandonment are at an end, and Parliament has assembled, that the Dissenters have determined on the adoption of active measures of resistance. The Dissenters have therefore shewn no desire to agitate unnecessarily the public feeling, still less to defeat any plan calculated to promote the benefit of the community; but, on the present occasion, when the moral welfare of their countrymen is deeply concerned, and their religious liberties manifestly endangered, they would be unworthy of their privileges as Englishmen, and their profession as Christians, were they to remain tamely silent, and not to exert their utmost powers to resist a Bill, fraught with injuries so serious to the best interests of society.

It has been stated, in defence of the Bill, that the system proposed to be established, has been found beneficial in other countries, and Scotland has been quoted, in support of the analogy; but, in truth, the

cases bear no parallel. In Scotland, the members of the Established Church, and the Seceders, though they differ on points of church government, concur in matters of faith. The catechism of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which is taught universally in the Scottish schools, is approved by nearly all the Protestant population in that part of the United Kingdom.

The policy of placing the schools under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and of uniting them to the Church Establishment, has been maintained, on the ground of giving them perpetuity; but it is not very clear how the union of such institutions, which are purely civil, with the national Church, can produce this effect. It will be generally acknowledged, that the permanence and stability of laws depend on their hold on public esteem and approbation. A measure calculated to ensure the universal instruction of the poor, on an enlarged basis, and not liable to the objections which have been urged, would be manifestly popular throughout the kingdom: and it is therefore difficult to comprehend how the permanency of schools will be more effectually secured by uniting them to a religious establishment.

It is however admitted, by the mover of the Bill, that though the measure professes to be national, it does confer exclusive privileges on the clergy of the Established Church; but it is contended, that whatever may be prejudicial to the Dissenters, from this circumstance, is counterbalanced by the moral good which the measure will eventually produce. Now the Dissenters believe, and it has been the

object of these observations to shew, that the Bill will not produce its intended effect. The evil is therefore acknowledged by all parties to be certain, while the benefit to result from it is a matter of opinion. Were the advantages of the Bill less doubtful, under these circumstances, warmly as the Dissenters feel in favour of the progress of knowledge, they would hesitate before they consented to promote the education, at the expense of the liberties, of the people. To forsake the right, with the view of pursuing the expedient, is a dangerous and an unsound principle of action. The good that is procured, by such means, is seldom worth the attainment. It is man's duty to pursue the plain and straight forward path of rectitude, and to leave all consequences to the disposal of that Being, "in whose hands are all things," and who out of evil will educe good.

The Dissenters therefore earnestly object to, and protest against, the Bill :

1. Because they are convinced that by discouraging the exertions of the public ; by impeding the progress of every plan for promoting education now in active operation ; by neglecting to call forth the energies of the poor ; and by omitting the use of those means which are absolutely necessary to ensure the instruction of the most indigent classes ; this Bill will not only fail to realize the hopes it holds forth, but will retard the very object for which it is enacted.

2. Because, by imposing a tax for the support of the schools to be established, it will prove practically

oppressive to those who desire to promote universal instruction, as they must maintain other schools for children whom this Bill will not benefit, viz.—a large proportion of the most indigent of the population; those who can receive education by means of Sunday Schools only; and others who may be driven from the “established” schools by mismanagement and oppression.

3. Because, while it commits the proposed schools to the sole management of the Clergy and Dignitaries of the Established Church, to the entire exclusion of the public at large, it provides no adequate check on the undue exercise of the power thus granted; which power, experience justifies the Dissenter in apprehending will be a dangerous instrument, liable to much abuse, and calculated to raise greater obstacles to the general end, than the advantages which it can possibly afford, will counterbalance.

4. Because it will prove injurious to the interests of religious liberty, by adding to the number of those civil disabilities under which Dissenters from the Church Establishment at present labour; thereby recognizing and legislating upon a principle which is the basis of all religious persecution, and which Christianity and enlightened policy unite to condemn.

It has been contended, that the opponents to the Bill in its present shape should suffer it to proceed, and on its clauses being discussed in a committee of

the House, propose such alterations as would, in their opinion, render it efficient and unexceptionable. But, it may in reply be stated, that, in the judgment of the Dissenters, the measure is objectionable in its main features, viz.—the rejection of public assistance, the exclusion of public management, and the violation of religious liberty. It is not the principle, but the specific and minor clauses of a Bill, that form the usual subjects for discussion on its committal; and the Dissenters are therefore earnestly entreated not to suffer any fallacious anticipation of relief, in this advanced stage, to delude them into fatal security, and induce them to postpone, even for a single day, the adoption of prompt and active measures of resistance.

By referring to the Bill, the reader will observe that there are other clauses which are highly exceptionable; but the objections which have been urged, are the most prominent. The present is not a party question, nor one which affects the separate interests of any religious denomination. It deeply concerns, and should awaken the alarm of all, who feel anxiously zealous for the extension of knowledge, and who justly appreciate the value of their religious liberties. Of one circumstance it is important that every Dissenter should be aware—that it is the mover's determination to press the measure, *without an hour's delay*. The opponents of the Bill must, therefore, make their stand, and *instantly* take the necessary steps for resisting its enactment; for they may be assured that, unless their efforts be promptly made, they will be altogether unavailing. The legitimate

and constitutional course to adopt on the occasion, is respectfully to petition both Houses of Parliament. Let every congregation of Dissenters, therefore, throughout the kingdom, *immediately* prepare a temperate yet earnest petition for the *rejection of the Bill*; and the friends to education have reason to hope, that such an appeal to the wisdom and justice of the Legislature will not be made in vain.

THE END.

FORM OF PETITION

TO

THE LEGISLATURE.



TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

To the Right Honorable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled :

The humble Petition of
sheweth,

That

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.



TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

To the Honorable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Ireland in Parliament assembled :

The humble Petition of
sheweth,

That

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

N. B. The Petitions should be written on Skins of Parchment.

WILLIAMSON'S

WILLIAMSON'S

WILLIAMSON'S

WILLIAMSON'S

WILLIAMSON'S

WILLIAMSON'S

WILLIAMSON'S

WILLIAMSON'S

WILLIAMSON'S

WILLIAMSON'S

WILLIAMSON'S

WILLIAMSON'S

THE ECLECTIC REVIEW,

FOR MARCH, 1821.

Art. I. 1. *Observations on Mr. Brougham's Education Bill*: shewing its Inadequacy to the End proposed, and the Danger that will arise from it to the Cause of Religious Liberty. 8vo. pp. 32. Price 6d. London. 1821.

2. *A Letter to Henry Brougham, Esq. M.P.* on certain Clauses in the Education Bills now before Parliament. By S. Butler, D.D. F.A.S. Head Master of Shrewsbury School. 8vo. pp. 24. 1820.

MR. BROUGHAM, by his persevering labours in the cause of general Education, has well deserved the gratitude of his country. Had popularity been his sole object in those labours, he could not have adopted a more honourable and virtuous method of earning it. The most disinterested patriotism could have dictated no course of senatorial exertions of higher utility, than those which have had for their object to drag to light the abuses of Public Charities, and to extend the benefits of Education to all classes of the community. Thwarted, misrepresented, vilified as he has been by those whose interests were endangered by inquiry, and those who are secretly hostile to Popular Education, it should seem to have required no ordinary firmness and energy, to bear right on in the prosecution of his noble enterprise, and even when, as in the case of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry, meanly defrauded of the fruits of his exertions, not to have abandoned, either in disgust or in despondency, the cause to which he had pledged himself. We have no personal acquaintance with Mr. Brougham; he is said to be in his temper and manners warm and impetuous, and is charged with having been very rude to Dr. Wood, when Dr. Wood displayed a reluctance to satisfy the inquiries of the Education Committee,—an offence never to be expiated in the sight of Dr. Wood's brethren: however this may have been, nothing could be more fair, and candid, and conciliatory than the whole of Mr. Brougham's parliamentary conduct in reference to the matters in question; and he has shewn at all times the utmost

solicitude to have the measures he has brought forward, freely and fully canvassed before they should receive the Legislative sanction.

From the very outset in his investigations, he found himself violently opposed by the Established clergy. The circumstance of his being an early member of the Committee of the British and Foreign School Society, would have been of itself sufficient to mark him out to their suspicion and professional antipathy; while, as a reformer, he must have calculated on drawing down upon himself no small share of odium. He was well aware that the cause of Education had been adopted by the Nationalists merely as a defensive and precautionary measure; adopted with reluctance and by constraint, to meet the exigencies of the times; and that towards that class whose exertions to promote popular education had rendered those defensive measures necessary, there existed a deeply rooted feeling of party animosity. We think it impossible that Mr. Brougham should not have anticipated the opposition and personal hostility which he was doomed to meet with from this quarter; but it is possible that he may not in the first instance have justly calculated the potency of that opposition, and that he too sanguinely imagined himself strong enough in the goodness of his cause, to achieve a great national good even in spite of those whom he could not hope to conciliate. If so, he has long since discovered his mistake, and repented of his imprudence. And the dilemma in which the discovery must have placed him, was, indeed, a trying one. On the one hand, to have renounced his long cherished legislative project, deeply impressed as he was with its utility and importance, on account of any obstacles which opposed its success, would have been chargeable on pique, on a deficiency of public spirit, or on a pusillanimity unworthy of his character. On the other hand, to attempt to realize that project, with both the Administration and the arrayed powers of the Church against him, was but to court defeat, and to oppose insuperable barriers to his future political advancement. There remained but a middle path; a difficult one, indeed, to tread with consistency and honour: it was to gain over by conciliatory overtures the opponents he had seemed to defy, and to submit to have his measures tutored and modified in order to purchase their concurrence. We think that Mr. Brougham deserves to have credit given him for a real anxiety to serve his country by the measure in question, since he has shewn such a readiness to sacrifice his own feelings and judgement, his former connexions, and even his consistency, in what has proved, after all, an unsuccessful attempt to disarm his adversaries.

In the very difficult circumstances in which Mr. Brougham was placed, we have felt it right to put the most candid con-

struction on every thing in his new Bill which has a hostile bearing on the interests of Dissenters. We never for a moment imagined that he was capable of designedly compromising their interests in order to propitiate the clergy. Mr. Brougham is, indeed, too keen a politician, too practised a legislator, not to be aware of the bearings of his own measure; nor would he thank us for a compliment on the score of integrity at the expense of his understanding. But, in steering a middle course, it was for him to do the best he could, leaving each party to take care of its own interests. Had he attempted to smuggle the measure through the House in the way that clauses of the most vexatious nature are often suffered to pass unnoticed in local Bills, he would have deserved the most indignant reprobation. But he has not done so. He has said, Examine the Bill in all its details, take the next six months to scan and discuss its merits, and let me hear all your objections. And if no objections had been started, he would have had a right to presume on the concurrence of those whom its being passed into a law would most deeply aggrieve.

Mr. Brougham has been told that the Dissenters would not object to his Bill, provided the Sacramental Test was given up. He has found Dissenters to tell him so. And when Lord Sidmouth brought forward his famous Bill for regulating the Dissenting ministry and amending the Toleration Act, he, too, found Dissenters pliant enough, and ignorant enough, to applaud his enlightened designs, and to assure him of the concurrence of their brethren. Lord Sidmouth complained, and he had perhaps a right to complain, that he was misled by certain Dissenters whom he consulted. Mr. Brougham would have a similar ground for exculpation, if he was suffered to remain longer in any uncertainty as to the feelings of the great body of Dissenters.

We do not, however, wonder that the Dissenters should have discovered some backwardness to oppose any measure of so vast apparent utility as that which promises to make Education in England universal;—universal, at least, so far as regards one sex, for the education of girls forms no part of the proposed measure. They were unwilling, we believe, that objections to the Bill should originate with them. In the same spirit as that in which their forefathers acquiesced in the passing of the Test Act, rather than endanger the Protestant succession, they seem to have been disposed to acquiesce in the Parochial Education Bill, rather than defeat the benevolent intention of its originator.

An article in a recent Number of the *Edinburgh Review*, had, we confess, too much of the appearance of an endeavour to take advantage of the easy simplicity and good nature of the Dissenters, and to cajole them into acquiescence. The style

of half-compliment half-banter in which it was written, shewed that the Reviewer, how highly soever he might rate the honesty, and liberality, and public spirit, and disinterestedness of the body, had estimated at a very low average their understandings. The ill-suppressed contemptuousness of the tone in which he condescends to meet their objections, and to flatter their prejudices, betrays insidiousness of intention. Besides, it was overwrought; it was the politeness of a man who wants to cheat you. And even had it been much less courtly, its appearance in a Journal which has so frequently held up these same sectaries to contempt and ridicule, would have justified its being received with not less suspicion than surprise.

A note at the close of that article, let out in some degree the real feeling of the Writer. He attempts to justify his 'distrust of the candour of some active men in London among the Dissenters,' by adverting to the 'appearance of resolutions concerning Mr. Brougham's plan because it imposed a Sacramental Test, a week after the provision had been given up.' Candour would have led the Reviewer to conclude that the resolutions alluded to were drawn up before that circumstance had become a week old; and prudence would have dictated his observing a delicate silence on the subject of Mr. Brougham's giving up what he ought to have known better than to propose. It is not from such a quarter that Dissenters had reason to expect the proposal to extend in a new direction the invidious and vexatious operation of the Test Act,—to carry, not merely its exclusive spirit, but the very letter of its iniquitous provisions into a system of national Education. For his own sake, we are glad that he has been advised to give it up; and if his Bill was likely to pass into a law, it would be matter of high satisfaction, that 'the symbols of atoning grace' were not afresh, by that statute, to be made

'An office-key, a pick-lock to a place.'

Mr. Brougham knows, however, if the Reviewer does not, that what is thus proclaimed to be *given up*, is in fact no concession to the Dissenters. Except as they deprecate so gross a prostitution of a sacred ordinance, it does not in the least concern them: it does not make the slightest difference in their situation, or in the operations of the Bill. Under the proposed act, be there test or no test, no Dissenter can be a parish schoolmaster; and therefore, whether the parish schoolmaster should so qualify or not, makes no difference to the Dissenter. One of its provisions would seem to be sufficiently express on this point: no person is to be capable of being elected by the parish, who does not produce 'a certificate of his character and abilities, and that he is a member of the Church

‘ of England as by law established, signed *by the resident officiating minister and three householders of the parish or chapelry where he lived for the last twelve months.*’ This, however, is not thought enough : to make sure double sure, the rector, vicar, or other officiating minister, ‘ shall have the power to call before him the person chosen, and to examine him touching his fitness for the place of schoolmaster, and shall not approve of him for such master, *unless he be satisfied that he is a member of the Church of England as by law established.*’ Now after this, what better than mockery and insolence is it in this Reviewer to talk of Mr. Brougham’s *giving up* to the Dissenters the provision respecting the Sacramental Test? We have said that it does not in fact concern the Dissenters at all; but if it did, does Mr. Brougham, or the Reviewer, or any one in his senses imagine, that the rector, or vicar, or curate of the applicant’s parish will grant a certificate testifying that he is a member of the Church of England, or that the rector, vicar, or curate of the parish in which the election takes place, will, on a personal examination of the master elect, be *satisfied* that he is a *bona fide* member of the Church of England, unless, in either case, he shall have taken the sacrament? Is there held to be, in fact, any other legal and unequivocal proof of Churchmanship, than this? And will Mr. Brougham’s having given it up, (that is to say, his having agreed to say nothing about it,) make the parson give it up or dispense with it? If not, to whom most truly applies the want of candour?

The objectionable Test is still, then, virtually included in the Bill as it now stands : it is not, in fact, given up. And the provision which is substituted for the clause, not only includes it, but goes far beyond the Test Act in its practical effect. It is well known that, in many cases, Dissenters have been chosen to fill parochial offices, and have been allowed to discharge the functions belonging to them, without submitting to the qualification. And had the parish schoolmaster been simply required by the provisions of Mr. Brougham’s Bill, so to qualify, it would have rested with the clergyman of the parish or the parishioners, to enforce or to suspend the law in that respect as circumstances might dictate. But the terms now inserted in the Bill, are so imperative as to leave no room for indulgence at the discretion of the electors and the officiating minister. The probability would have been, that the Test, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, would have been positively enforced. The chance would have been exceedingly small, that a Dissenter should have been elected, much less approved. But Mr. Brougham’s *concession* to the Dissenters has made room for the provision, that, in the hundredth case, the Test shall not

be dispensed with; that the clergyman 'shall not approve' of the candidate unless he be *satisfied* that he is a member of the Church of England as by law established.

Let us have fair play. Whatever Dissenters may choose to submit to, or may be compelled to submit to, let them do it with their eyes open. And it cannot be either the interest or the wish of Mr. Brougham to deceive them. The fact is this. The proposed Bill would have for its object to create an indefinite extension of an exclusive Church Establishment, at the general expense, in the shape of Parish schools. The Dissenter reasonably complains that public schools should be identified with such an Establishment, and that the existing civil disabilities by which he is already aggrieved, should be vexatiously multiplied; that he should be held unfit to occupy the office of even a parish schoolmaster. The Bill would have the effect of entailing fresh burthens upon the Dissenters in common with the rest of their fellow subjects, while it would exclude them from an equal participation in the benefits of the system; and they reasonably complain that they should be compelled to pay for the support of institutions over which they are to have no control, and which are both adapted and designed to operate to their disadvantage. The Bill is framed for the avowed purpose of taking the education of the lower classes out of the hands of the public, of superseding the very extensive combination of voluntary labourers in the work of popular Education, of breaking up the existing machinery of Sunday schools and British and Foreign schools, in order to throw the exclusive management, inspection, and control of the whole into the hands of the parson of the parish. The Dissenter complains of this measure, first, as unjust; secondly, as injurious to the cause of Education itself.

Had we not the deepest conviction that the proposed enactments would have on the whole a prejudicial operation on the general interests of the community, we should feel greatly reluctant to press those objections which concern us simply as Dissenters. But we firmly believe that the provisions of the Bill would *not* secure the design of the preamble. That preamble briefly shews, that 'it is expedient to provide sufficient and permanent means of Education for His Majesty's subjects within the dominion of England and Wales and town of Berwick upon Tweed, to the end that all classes of the people may reap the great benefit of improvement in knowledge, morals, and religion, which are the main support of every nation.' We shall endeavour to shew, that the existing means are under-rated; that the provision of sufficient means, forms no security that they will be availing; and that no adequate improvement of the people in knowledge, morals, or religion, is likely to result from the measure. In arguing these points, we

shall dismiss as far as possible all considerations bearing upon the peculiar interests of the Dissenters.

I. With regard to the want of education which now exists. The Tables appended to the Report of the Education Committee, have been confidently appealed to as establishing that fact to the numerical extent exhibited, 'beyond all controversy.' There is nothing so imposing as figures; nor is there any thing, sometimes, more fallacious. The queries of the Education Committee respecting the state of Education in every parish or chapelry, were addressed to the parochial clergy; and we do not mean to say that they were not the most fit and proper persons to be applied to as a matter of courtesy; but we maintain, from our knowledge of facts, that the returns furnished by the clergyman of the parish, were not likely, in a large proportion of instances, to comprise the whole sum of exertion. In numberless cases, the clergyman would be ignorant of the number of children educated in the schools of the Dissenters, and would be disinclined to make the requisite inquiry. This is expressly admitted in some of the returns. In many instances, he would not choose to report them,—would not choose to recognise the existence within his parish of the humble means of education provided by the obnoxious diligence of the sectaries. It is quite certain that instances of this kind have been sufficiently numerous to affect very materially the correctness of the Tables. The following is the result of the Tables according to the view of the Edinburgh Reviewer.

'The Endowed Schools in England teach about 165,000 children; the Unendowed Day Schools, 478,000. But this includes 53,000 taught at the Dame Schools, where infants are generally sent before they are of an age to go to school or learn almost any thing. It includes also the lace and straw schools of the midland counties, where we much fear little, that is useful is in general learnt. If, then, we deduct for these schools, we shall have 590,000 children taught at Day Schools; and we must add about 10,000 for deficient returns, several parishes having made none. To this number of 600,000 are to be added the children belonging to persons in the upper and middle classes of society who educate their children, particularly daughters, at home or at boarding schools, not noticed in the Tables, though frequently in the Digest. Mr. Brougham, from the population returns, considered 50,000 as a proper allowance for this class, but, if any thing, too small; and the next addition made was incontestably much too large, except that he was desirous of rather understating than overstating the deficiency. He allowed, of the 452,000 taught at Sunday schools, 100,000 as attending those institutions beyond the numbers included in the column of Day Schools; the known fact being, that a greater proportion than seven ninths of the Sunday scholars attend Week day schools. The grand total of children educated in any way, even in the scanty measures dealt out by Sunday schools, is thus only 750,000. Now, the lowest estimate

of the means of education for any country, requires that there should be schools for one-tenth of the population; but from the Digest it clearly appears that a larger proportion is requisite, especially if we include the means for all classes, high as well as low. Mr. Brougham reckons rather more than one-ninth; but taking one-tenth as the scale, it thus appears that there are only the means of educating seven millions and a half of the people of England, leaving no less than two millions without any education, and three millions without the only effectual education, namely, that obtained at Day Schools.'

No. lxvii. pp. 227, 8.

The total number of Sunday Schools in the Table is 5,162; that of the children taught in them, 452,817, which is about 90 to a school. This number, we are inclined to think, is a higher average than would be given by a calculation which should include all the Sunday Schools conducted by different denominations of Protestants in the kingdom; and it confirms our persuasion of the essential inaccuracy of the returns. But of these 450,000, seven ninths are struck off by the Reviewer as attending week-day schools, and as being therefore included in the columns of Day Schools. This is not calculation: it is mere assumption, and an assumption exceedingly erroneous. On this point we shall avail ourselves of the remarks of a High Church Reviewer, and reiterate the question he puts to Mr. Brougham: What week-day schools is it supposed that these seven-ninths, or 350,000, frequent?

'Not National schools,' continues the Reviewer, 'or Church schools of any description; for it is a rule in nearly all of them, that the children should attend Church in the character of day scholars; and it would require very strong evidence to convince us that one-ninth instead of seven-ninths of the children who are educated in communion with the Church, are enrolled at the same time on a Sunday and a week-day list. If we suppose that their number may amount to 50,000, we admit what we have no reason to believe. And yet even this admission leaves 300,000 unaccounted for, or to be found, if they are found any where, in the schools of Dissenters. But the whole number of day-scholars, according to Mr. B., is 590,000; and we presume he will not contend that 300,000 of these are the children of Dissenters. For if he does, he must also contend that the schools of the Dissenters contain more than three fifths of all the educated children of the country; for their old schools, like our Church schools, are not left to themselves on the Sabbath, and the children of persons in easy circumstances are not in the habit of attending Sunday schools; adding 60,000 for these, we shall have 360,000 children of Dissenters, and only 230,000 children of Churchmen! The proportion is greater than that of three to two; and it shews that there must be an error in Mr. Brougham's calculation.

'The same thing may be proved in a different way. Sunday schools are most numerous in manufacturing districts, where the labour of children is too valuable to be sacrificed to their education. Can it be

believed that these children frequent day-schools in the proportion of seven-ninths? In fact there are not at present day-schools to hold them. Sunday-schools are also very principally composed of children who have learned to read and write at the day-schools, and are taken away by their parents at an early age. *This is the legitimate use and application of the system*; and it is fatal to Mr. B.'s theory of seven-ninths. Instead of calculating, therefore, that there are 100,000 only to be reckoned for the Sunday schools, let us assume what is below the truth, that 200,000, or nearly four-ninths of the whole may be fairly counted.' Christian Remembrancer, Feb. 1, 1821. p. 92.

In confirmation of this estimate, we may refer to a statement inserted in a periodical work specifically devoted to Sunday Schools, from which it appears, that, in four Sunday schools conducted by Dissenters in different quarters of London, where the proportion of Day scholars is certainly greater than in manufacturing districts, the number of children who attend Day schools is rather more than one-third, being 556 out of 1461; and in Bradford in Wiltshire, it is about one-sixth, or 118 out of 694. We have already remarked that the number of Sunday schools is itself under-rated: they are altogether omitted in some of the returns, as in the cases of Liverpool, Sunderland, Olkton, and Alverstoke, containing Gosport. It is not a little remarkable, that the Edinburgh Reviewer, while he adds 10,000 to the total number of children taught at the Day Schools, in order to make up for deficient returns, deems it unnecessary to make any addition whatever in estimating the number taught in Sunday Schools; whereas, instead of one-sixtieth, he might in the latter case have added at least one-tenth, and stated the total in round numbers at 500,000. Of these one half may safely be reckoned as *not* included in the number of those who attend week-day schools. And this number, added to the 600,000 Day Scholars, and the 50,000 children educated in boarding schools or at home, will make a total of 900,000, which, taking one tenth of the population as the number to be provided with the means of education, will leave only half a million of uneducated people.

The 'Christian Remembrancer' arrives at the same conclusion by a different process. He considers the number allowed for children of the upper and middle classes who are taught at boarding schools and at home, not merely 'if any thing, too small,' but too small by one half; and he grounds this opinion on the statement of the Edinburgh Reviewer, taken from the Digest, that the deficiency of the means of Education is greatest in Lancaster and Middlesex. That statement is as follows:

'In the four northern counties of Westmorland, Cumberland, Northumberland, and Durham, the average (of the means) is about one-

tenth; in Westmoreland it is as high as one-seventh or one eighth—being superior to the Pays de Vaud, and consequently the best educated district in Europe. In Wilts and Somersetshire, the average is one-eighteenth or one-nineteenth; in Lancaster* and Middlesex one-twenty-fourth. But before the establishment of the new schools in Middlesex, it was as low as one-forty-sixth. It thus appears that at the present moment there are not the means of Education for one half the people in the metropolitan county; and that, but a few years ago, there were three fourths of that population destitute of those means!’ *Edinburgh Review*. No. lxvii. p. 229.

Now it is in Middlesex more especially that there are to be found a prodigious number of boarding schools and day schools, which it is almost out of the power of a clergyman to investigate. ‘The charity schools, the free school, (if there happen to be one,) and perhaps one or two conspicuous boarding schools, may be accurately registered; but if Mr. Brougham really believes that he has procured a return of all the boarding schools which surround the metropolis, and of all the day schools, and evening schools, and night schools, which swarm in its alleys, he is a more credulous man,’ says this *Christian Remembrancer*, ‘than we could have imagined.’ Mr. Brougham’s calculation, however, of the number of children educated in boarding schools, is stated to have been formed upon the population returns, and not upon actual information. In what precise way that calculation was drawn, we are not informed; but half a million would seem to be a very small section of the population to include all those of the upper and the middle classes who educate their children at home or at boarding schools. The *Christian Remembrancer* cannot be much beyond the mark in doubling the number, and allowing 100,000 children as provided for by this means. But if we subscribe to the correctness of this calculation, it will actually leave no deficit, and we shall be chargeable with having proved too much. Let it, however, be remembered, that the estimate of the requisite means of education on which the calculation has proceeded, namely, that there should be schools for one tenth of the population, is confessedly too low. From the *Digest*, a larger proportion appears to be requisite, especially if we include the higher classes; and Mr. Brougham reckons rather more than one ninth, which would make a difference of 100,000 in the number to be provided for. Supposing this to be correct, and that one million of the people (Mr. Brougham says two millions; the *Christian Remembrancer* half a million) are without education, still, it will not follow that the 100,000 children which they ought to furnish to our schools,

* In Lancaster, the returns, so far as regards Sunday Schools, are especially defective.

are destitute of the *means* of education. Does Mr. Brougham imagine that all who are uneducated have had no opportunity of attending a school of any description? Has he never heard of there being a difficulty in persuading parents to let their children attend at schools where the education is wholly gratuitous? We can inform him that, among the lower classes, it is very difficult to secure their attendance without some species of *bonus* or bribe, and that many parents are ignorant enough to think that they oblige the patrons or teachers of the school, by suffering their children to be taught. And does he suppose that the establishment of a parish school will work so wondrous a revolution in their ideas, that they will not simply accept the offer of education for their children, but be forward to pay for it? Hear again the testimony of our Churchman.

‘ Very few of our large schools are as full as they might be. Ten per cent might on an average be added without inconvenience to the day schools; and a still larger proportion to the Sunday schools; and while we admit that the latter do not furnish as much as is required, except under very peculiar and favourable circumstances, still we cannot consent to set them wholly aside, or to speak of children who might attend them, as unprovided with the means of education. Another, and we fear a very formidable deduction must be made before we can ascertain the want of school room, *viz.* the amount of those who would neglect, if they possessed it. It is usually said that children ought to continue at school from seven to fourteen years of age; and no doubt it is desirable that they should. But if Mr. B.’s calculation of one tenth as the proportion of the population that ought to be under education, rests upon this principle, we are quite convinced that it can never apply to a populous town, or a manufacturing county. In such places you may offer education gratis, and give clothes into the bargain, and half your children will be taken from your day schools at twelve years of age. And what is worse, many children will never be brought to you at all; but will be suffered by their parents to wallow in filth and vice while they are little, and will be required to labour, perhaps beyond their strength, as soon as they are old enough to work. The theorist may calculate how many children out of every hundred ought to attend his schools; and may fancy that all who can, will avail themselves of this privilege, and even contribute moderately towards the remuneration of the teacher. But we never yet met with any practical man who affirmed that this was really the case in the neighbourhood of great towns. On the whole, we conclude, from Mr. Brougham’s own figures, that the number of children who are anxious, but unable to gain admission even to a day school, is very small, and that almost every child may attend a Sunday school if his parents please.’

We are glad to receive an admission from such a quarter, that Sunday Schools, even Dissenting Sunday Schools, are an efficient provision for the education of the lower classes, although

they do not furnish as much as is desirable. It is thus that truth is struck out by collision. The Edinburgh Reviewer had spoken of all the children taught only in Sunday Schools, of whatever description, as being without 'the only effectual education, namely that obtained at day schools.' It is obvious, that he entertains toward those institutions a sentiment bordering upon contempt, and that he would view with philosophical complacency their extinction by means of Parish schools. If our statement of the number taught in these schools be correct, and two millions and a half of the people, instead of one million,—that is, above a fourth of the population,—are indebted to them for the opportunity of having their children taught, it becomes a consideration of so much the greater importance, what is their average character in point of real efficiency; for by this must mainly be determined the question of the pressing necessity of the proposed legislative enactments.

No one will contend that the instruction a child receives in a Sunday School, is all the education that is desirable for the lower classes. It is desirable that a child should be taught, not only to read, but also to write and cast accounts; and these branches of elementary education cannot be taught in a large proportion of Sunday Schools. One day in the week, moreover, even if the greater part of the hours of the Sunday are so employed, is a very small proportion of time to be occupied in training the minds of the children to sober and intelligent habits; in counteraction, it may be, of the demoralizing influence they are exposed to at home or in the manufactory on the other six days. But then, with regard to a large proportion of the population, multiply day-schools as you will, that which is afforded in Sunday Schools is, as has been shewn, *the only education* which they can or will obtain. And where it is not the only education which the children of the poor receive, where Sunday Schools are mainly composed of children previously taught to read and write, it is so much additional education which those children would otherwise not receive; and, therefore, it is still, during the term of their attendance at such schools, the only education they would obtain. And by attending one day in the week during successive years at a Sunday School, they are likely to receive more educational instruction in point of quantity, if we may so express it, than they would be allowed time to acquire by a six days' attendance at a week-day school for a shorter term.

The Sunday School system is recommended, again, by its being beyond all comparison *the cheapest*; not merely as being absolutely gratuitous, but as involving less expense to its conductors than any other; less expense in the most important article of consumption—time. Time is, on all other days, a marketable commodity. Time and health are the poor man's whole

capital. But, in Sunday Schools, though the *labour* of the teachers is entitled to remuneration, their *time* can be afforded at a much lower price than on any other day; and both their time and labour are, to a vast extent, cheerfully—we were going to say munificently—bestowed; for there are many splendid benefactions which are less entitled to the name of munificence. This is not the only respect in which Sunday Schools are the cheapest: they are the cheapest schools to such parents as can make any thing of the time of their children; and in manufacturing districts, this cheap education, cheap as costing nothing in time, is all they can afford to bestow upon them after a very early age.

Sunday Schools have this further advantage over all other schools, that *they are more especially under the check and control of the public*, and the best part of the public, the benevolent and the pious. They present, therefore, the greatest possible security against abuses in the management of them. They are at the same time the only mode in which the education of the lower classes can be conducted under the immediate inspection, and often with the personal assistance, of individuals of the middle and higher classes. A professional inspector, a solitary and occasional visiter of the parish-school, would, it appears to us, be a very poor substitute for the constant intercourse between the higher and the lower classes, which is, to a great extent, carried on by means of Sunday Schools, and for the vigilant inspection to which they are uniformly exposed. Nor, if we are to take the preamble of Mr. Brougham's Bill as a correct definition of the end of Education, are these the only advantages by which Sunday Schools are distinguished. If an improvement in morals and religion, as well as knowledge, be, as is there very properly set forth, the main part of the education which it is sought to provide for the lower classes, we cannot but look upon Sunday Schools as entitled to much higher consideration than Mr. Brougham is disposed to concede to them. The numerical proportion of instances is, we conceive, very large, in which the education they afford is strictly to be termed 'effectual.'

II. We have anticipated much of what would go to prove that the provision of sufficient means of Education for the whole population, includes in it no security that such means will be availing, or will be accepted by the poor themselves. The Edinburgh Reviewer is very anxious to impress upon Dissenting objectors to State interference, that while 'the supply of articles of prime necessity in every country, may safely be left to be regulated by the demand;' and while 'there is no risk of any class of persons being long in want of them, who can afford to pay a fair price for the acquisition, because all pretty nearly stand equally in need of them; it is otherwise with Education.'

‘The poor,’ he goes on to say, ‘are apt to undervalue it, or at least to postpone it to more sensible objects; and if there are many, or even several persons in any district who seek it not, their negligence puts it out of the reach of those who desire it, because it reduces the number of scholars below that which can maintain a master. It would indeed be a fair position to lay down, that the whole of the poor in any country, care considerably less for instruction than they ought; and that their wish for it is never strong and steady enough to command a regular and secure supply. Bad times come, and the quarter pence are grudged; the school is broke up. The distress passes away, and the poor next year are anxious for instruction: but a long time must now elapse before another school will be ventured upon in that quarter where it had so lately failed. From a consideration of this circumstance, it seems reasonable to conclude, that they are right who maintain the principle of bringing Education to the door as it were of the poor man, both in towns and country districts, by extraordinary encouragements to the establishment of schools, which requires a certain zeal and a certain combination to effect it, and may therefore most strictly be placed on the same footing with the erection of public works.’ No. lxvii. p. 226.

It is impossible that this Reviewer can think it necessary to convince either his old friends, the Committee of the British and Foreign School Society, or the patrons of the Sunday School system, of the necessity of bringing Education to the door of the poor man. Why, it is the very thing they have been aiming at, and which they have largely succeeded in accomplishing all over the kingdom. A ‘certain zeal’ and a ‘certain combination,’ have been brought to bear upon this great object, which sufficiently disprove the necessity of those extraordinary encouragements to which the Reviewer alludes. From the opening of his argument, it might have been anticipated that he was about to conduct us to a widely different inference. Since the poor are apt to care so little for instruction, something beyond the establishment of schools would seem to be requisite. Education may be brought to their doors, and there, often, it may lie, unless they are compelled to open their doors to its reception; unless, in other words, they are compelled to have their children educated. Without some enactment that shall effect this compulsion, all the Reviewer’s reasonings, and all Mr. Brougham’s calculations, will fall to the ground. Is the Reviewer prepared to maintain *this* principle? Had he condescended to read the eloquent Essay, the title of which is prefixed to his article, he would have found a recommendation that might in that case have suited his purpose. Mr. Foster enumerates among other specific means for improving the mental and moral condition of the people which might have been called into operation, first, ‘schools of the most perfect appointment in every section and

'corner;' and next, '*a system of friendly but cogent and peremptory dealing with all the people of inferior condition*, relatively to the necessity of their practical accordance *to the plans of education.*' The Writer was well aware that his Utopian sketch would have been quite incomplete without such a provision; and he was conscious, too, that it would startle many of his readers. He adds, in a note:

'It is here most confidently presumed, that any man who looks, in a right state of his senses, at the manner in which the children are still brought up, in many parts of the land, will bear with unlimited contempt any hypocritical protest against so much interference with the discretion, the liberty of parents;—the discretion, the liberty, forsooth, of bringing up their children a nuisance on the face of the earth.'

It will be time enough, perhaps, when such a system of peremptory dealing is submitted to the Legislature by the Education Committee, for us to discuss its feasibility. With all our respect for the opinions of the powerful Writer whose words we have just given, we shall in that event be undeterred by his indignant *careat*, or by the risk of being thought not 'in a right state of our senses,' from freely stating our objections to such compulsory interference. What we now wish to point out is, the utter insufficiency of any plans for annihilating ignorance by Acts of Parliament, that shall not go this length. And then, the principle of benevolent compulsion or peremptory dealing being once admitted, what should hinder its application to other matters which the poor are equally prone to undervalue? If you compel them to have their children educated,—compel them too to pay, first, the school-rate for that purpose, and then, the quarter pence, and laugh at the idea of their standing out on the ground of a right to exercise their own discretion in bringing up their children; why should you not compel parents as well as children to come to church? Why not revive the old laws against being absent from public worship, to say nothing of the laws against sabbath-breaking, swearing, and drunkenness? A liberty and a discretion in these matters, would be pleaded with still less plausibility. Is Mr. Brougham a friend to those statutes, or to the principle of those statutes? Probably not. But unless his parochial school system is to be enforced by provisions in the spirit of those enactments, with which, indeed, it appears to us sufficiently to harmonize, he much deceives himself in calculating on the extent of its efficiency.

III. That no adequate improvement of the people in knowledge, morals, or religion, is likely to result from the general adoption of the proposed measure, would seem to follow as a natural corollary from the preceding remarks. But there are other considerations which strengthen this conclusion.

The first respects the inherent practical defects of the Parochial system itself, on which the new schools are to be grafted. These defects have been so conspicuously displayed in the administration of the Poor Laws, that legislative interference has been found wholly inadequate to remedy the evil. The abuses which rank under the head of parish jobs and parish litigations, those which relate to work-houses, especially in parishes where the poor are farmed, and we may add those of parish schools, are so notorious, so proverbial, that they must be considered as inseparable from the system. The very provisions of Mr. Brougham's Bill are framed in anticipation of abuses, which the utmost precaution will not be able to prevent. There will infallibly be litigation and jobs under the Act, if it passes into a law, in spite of all its plausible provisoes. The Act will benefit the village lawyer, the parish builder, and, in most cases, the parish clerk, to whom it should seem, from a clause in the Bill, the office of schoolmaster is likely to be given. But it will not benefit the payers of the school-rate, for it is not adapted to promote the cause of Education. Will it be credited that it is not even provided by the Bill, that the parish schoolmaster should be conversant with the improved method of tuition adopted in the British and Foreign, and in the National Schools?

The exclusion of the public, that is, of the payers of the rate, from all control and management, except the *congé d'elire* subject to the rector's *veto*, is another striking and most repulsive feature of the present project. No account is to be rendered to the public of either the proficiency of the scholars or the application of the funds. In this respect, less security against abuses is provided than already exists with regard to parish matters in general. The sole right of visitation being conferred on the parish minister, the ordinary, and the diocesan,—that is to say, on persons uninterested, it may be, in the school itself, and, at all events, not accountable for either inattention or injustice,—these institutions must be viewed as entirely withdrawn from the only effective superintendence, that of public opinion. One might have thought that Mr. Brougham would be of all men the last to fall into the egregious mistake of committing a charitable institution implicitly to *official* management. We are, indeed, at a loss to reconcile this part of his conduct with a sincere anxiety that the objects of his Bill should be carried into effect. It is not using too strong language to characterize it as ‘altogether at variance with the experience which recent discoveries in charitable abuses furnish, with good policy, and with common sense.’

Another most important consideration is this : The calculations of Mr. Brougham and the special pleading of the Edinburgh Reviewer, proceed upon the delusive notion that the projected

parish schools will in all cases be so much *added* to the existing means of Education. We are, on the contrary, fully persuaded that they will be almost uniformly *substituted* for existing institutions. We will not say that this makes all the difference, but it makes a very material difference in respect to the advisableness of the scheme. Every plan for promoting the Education of the poor now in active operation, will be impeded and counteracted by the measure. The National Schools, indeed, will change only their name, while their supporters will cheerfully relinquish their voluntary subscriptions, in order that the schools may be put upon the establishment of parish schools, (for which an express provision is contained in the Bill,) and that the Dissenters may pay their due share towards their support, in the shape of a rate. This, to be sure, does look like a hardship on the Dissenters, but then they are told by Mr. Brougham, that it would be highly illiberal to complain of it, since the grievance is counterbalanced by the moral good which the Nation at large will reap from the measure. But wherefore all this zeal on the part of Mr. Brougham to relieve the members of the Establishment from the expense of supporting their own schools? For this is the real drift of the Bill. We have heard no other intelligible reason than this; that 'private beneficence is not to be trusted to;' that 'such resources are fluctuating and uncertain;' and that 'such a variable supply is ill adapted to meet a demand which either is or ought to be made constant and regular.' But do the committees of the Societies for promoting Education among the poor, make any complaints that should authorize this representation? Are there any symptoms of a declining zeal or of exhausted resources? Have Sunday Schools diminished in number? Have any National Schools been abandoned? The Edinburgh Reviewer tells us, that the British and Foreign School Society has not been properly supported, and that it never has at any time had an income of 1500*l.* a year even on paper. Why, then, does he not recommend that an application to Parliament should be made for a grant to replenish its exhausted funds? This, in the case of either society, would seem to be the most direct and the most economical way of obtaining the object of Mr. Brougham's Bill, by throwing fresh vigour into existing institutions, and providing for their perpetuity. An annual grant for this object, would be both wisely and cheaply bestowed.* We are not sure, however,

* Since this article was sent to press, a pamphlet has fallen into our hands, entitled, "Plain Thoughts on the Abstract of Mr. Brougham's Education Bill. By a plain Englishman." The Author is a member of the Establishment, but his view of the mischiefs likely to arise from legislative and magisterial interference with the progressive work of popular Education is, for the most part, in accordance with

that even this is as yet necessary. If Mr. Brougham's old institution, the British and Foreign School Society, has not met with adequate support, it has been owing to other circumstances than the fickleness of private beneficence, or an indifference on the part of the public to the cause of Education. Into these circumstances we are not called to enter; but shall simply refer, in proof of our assertion, to the immense extension of the means of Education which has, since the formation of that Society, been accomplished in other directions by simultaneous and rival efforts. The National Society itself has grown out of the Royal Lancasterian Institution. But it has, of necessity, abridged very much the operations, by absorbing the resources, of the elder Society. We are not to look, then, at the narrow income of the

that which we have taken. Many of his remarks display as much true liberality as sound sense. 'We are,' he says, 'for forcing no man's conscience, for obliging no parent to send his child to Church against his religious scruples; but then, we insist that it is proper such children should be educated apart from others; that it would satisfy neither party to behold this motley mixture of Churchmen and Dissenters, and that *it is far better to grant distinct sums* for these purposes, than to risk the safety of the whole community by such rash and dangerous experiments.'—'Both Societies (the British and Foreign and the National) are accomplishing their purposes quite as rapidly as their best friends can desire. *As rivals and competitors, I am persuaded, they are mutually serviceable to each other*: they are at once checks against abuse, and springs for mutual activity. Should it, however, be thought expedient to allow some *Parliamentary aid* for a few years, (like that which is annually granted to the British Museum,) to assist both of these Institutions in the *erection of schools*, we should have the best security for the proper disbursement of such money in their past exertions.' 'By many I am aware it will be thought that we are too lax and indulgent in our concession, that a sum of money from the public purse might be granted to aid the education of those who dissent from the National Church. In strict legal propriety the objection may be valid; for toleration, not encouragement, is all that a Dissenter can strictly demand. But, on such an occasion, we are willing to enlarge the strict obligations of justice, and to allow, that if it be decided all classes of the community should be educated, it might be expedient to afford the means of such education to the children of Dissenters as well as to others. Let this, however, be done in such a manner, that the Established Church shall receive neither insult nor damage. But this can be effected only by the establishment of *separate institutions*; and, *cost what it may, it will be found cheap generosity in the end.*' Mr. Brougham's measure is 'obnoxious in all its bearings, for it endeavours to *substitute the force of law for the influence of opinion*. It is at once arbitrary and latitudinarian, oppressive and licentious. It trenches on the liberty of the subject, and it destroys the discipline of the church.'

latter as a detached circumstance proving the danger of trusting to private beneficence. We are to look at the sum total of exertion which has been brought to bear on the general object. And this, without taking into the account the rapid multiplication of Sunday Schools within the same period, has been amply sufficient to disprove the Reviewer's representation.

Whatever may be the state of the funds of the British and Foreign School Society, we have not heard that its Committee are at all disposed to break up their institutions, or to convert them, as Mr. Brougham would recommend, into parish schools. They view with no satisfaction a plan that is to relieve them from all further expense and labour. They perceive that their schools will be in many places robbed both of subscribers and of scholars by the parish school; but they do not perceive how this will promote the cause of Education, or augment the number of the taught. In some cases, the British and Foreign school and the National school, where both exist in the same town or village, will alike merge in the parish school. We much question whether the extinction of so much spontaneous effort, at once stimulated and regulated by competition, will be counterbalanced by the advantages of having all the work performed according to act of parliament by the parish schoolmaster.

It is undeniable that National Schools have generally originated in the spirit of competition. They have seldom been established in places where no previous efforts had been made to educate the poor. We infer from this circumstance, the high probability that parish schools will be instituted, if the present Bill passes into a law, with precisely similar views. We fear that it will require some more cogent motive to induce persons to tax themselves with an *extra* rate, in addition to the tithe and the poor's rate, than a solicitude that the means of Education should be extended to their poorer fellow-parishioners. That motive may very possibly be supplied by the flourishing state of a sectarian Sunday School, to put down which the projected measure will furnish a seasonable expedient. At present, the only resource is a Church Sunday School or a National School; but these involve private expense, voluntary subscriptions, some portion of labour, perhaps, on the part of its promoters, and more or less constant attention. But, by Mr. Brougham's Bill, the thing is done at once, and the sectaries are made to pay for it. A few miscellaneous extracts from the Parliamentary Digest will shew that this representation is by no means a hypothetical one, and that to the Dissenters mainly the poorer classes are in many districts indebted for what education they have.

P. 126. *Wigton, Cumberland.* 'Owing to the extent of the population, and the want of convenience, the poorer classes are without

212 *Observations on Mr. Brougham's Education Bill.*

sufficient means of education, and therefore send their children to the Methodist school.'

P. 134. *Brimington, Derby.* 'The poor are most deplorably in need of the means of education, and owing to the want of a school, the children are under the necessity of attending the Methodist Sunday School.'

P. 157. *Bridford.* 'The establishment of a school in this parish would be of the first importance, both to the poor, and to the established religion; as the Dissenters induce the poorer children to attend their schools.'

P. 246. *Great Bandfield, Essex.* 'In the opinion of the minister, it would obviate any detriment to the National Church occasioned by the artifices of sectaries, if a fund were established to enable the poor to educate their children free of expense.'

P. 328. *Basbury, Hereford.* 'It would be *beneficial* if young persons between fourteen and eighteen years of age, *were compelled to come to Church* every Sunday Evening to be instructed in the principles of the Christian religion.'

P. 354. *Cheshunt, Herts.* 'Twelve schools kept by old women and Methodists' !!!

P. 451. *Long Claxton, Leicester.* 'The poorer classes possess the means of education, but are not desirous of availing themselves of them, the influence of the Dissenters being too prevalent in the parish.'

P. 462. *Sharnford, Leicester.* 'The minister has endeavoured, and is still attempting, to obtain a permanent school on the principles of the Established Church; but, owing to the chief inhabitants being strict *Dissenters*, they will not suffer the children of their labourers to be instructed in the *Protestant faith*' !!! The trouble and expense of the Sunday School are stated to 'fall too hard on the minister.'

P. 589. *Edingthorpe, Norfolk.* 'A great proportion being Dissenters, it is not supposed that the establishment of a school would answer any good purpose.'

P. 693. *Attenborough, Notts.* 'The minister suggests the propriety of parish paupers, with their children, being *compelled to attend church* on Sundays.'

P. 726. *Lewknor, Oxon.* 'A Dissenting Sunday School has been completely superseded by the establishment of a Church of England one.'

P. 853. *Warslow, Staffordshire.* 'The minister thinks, that while the Methodists are permitted to have the chief influence at Sunday Schools in this and other populous manufacturing districts, the advantages to be derived from them are at best equivocal, and their continuance dangerous; and as *free admission is given to all classes of children*, it frequently happens that those children who are not in want of such institutions, are more sought after and better attended to, than those who do.'

P. 1054. *Broughton Hackett, Worcestershire.* 'A school in a central situation would provide instruction for five parishes, and it

seems more desirable that such an establishment should be speedily promoted, as it might be the best means of checking the very irregular proceedings of the sectarists.'

P. 1067. *Stockton, Worcestershire.* 'The poorer classes have the opportunity of educating their children in the National School at Abberley, but, as it is supported by subscription, it is consequently uncertain as to its duration, and limited as to its benefit.' The minister adds, that 'it is deeply to be lamented, that an authorized and diffused system of education, founded on a more solid basis, does not generally exist; for *so long as education is the effort of volition, the zealous sectarian will outwork the members of the Established Church,* and forward dissension by promoting an object so obviously tending to the reception of religious impression; thus retarding at least the great end of all instruction, the advancement of moral truth.'

P. 1069. *Warndon, Worcestershire.* 'The labouring classes are too poor to give their children instruction, but are very desirous of having them taught; so much so, that they send them to Worcester on Sundays to be instructed by the Methodist teachers, conceiving it better for them to be in the school of Dissenters, than remain in ignorance at home.'

P. 1069. *Yardley, Worcestershire.* 'A Sunday School supported by Dissenters, in which thirty-one boys and twenty-four girls are instructed. The poorer classes are entitled to have their children educated free of expense at the endowed schools; but the master of the school at Yardley will not take their boys till they can read, nor the girls under any circumstances, without being paid for their instruction; in which case they are obliged to send them to the Dissenters' schools, the masters of which use both threats and allurements to induce the children to attend the school and forsake the Church. The preceding Dissenters belong to the meeting-house in Carr-lane, at which a society called the Hampden Club was held;* and in Birmingham there is a set of men who have formed themselves into a society for the instruction of children into their own principles, who, on a Sunday, go out in all directions from thence to teach the country villagers in its vicinity.'

We offer no remark on the enlightened and liberal sentiment, the correct information, and the sound logic displayed in these extracts. It must have been, doubtless, when fresh from the perusal of such returns from the clergy, that Mr. Brougham determined on the expediency of constituting the officiating minister of the parish or chapelry, absolute sovereign of the parish school. We have adduced them to shew, that the projected institutions would, for the most part, be *substituted* for

* It cannot be necessary to inform our readers that this is a mere fabrication, a very foolish but a very malicious one. See a Letter from the Rev. J. A. James, the minister of Carr-lane meeting-house, in the London Christian Instructor, Feb. 1821. The returns abound with similar calumnies.

National Schools or Dissenting Sunday Schools now in active operation, and that it is grossly incorrect, therefore, to advocate the measure on the ground of its being adapted to supply the alleged deficiency in the existing means of education. Whether the education these schools would furnish, would be better or worse in *quality* than that supplied by Sunday Schools, is not the present question: we believe that it would not be better, because the constitution of them includes no security that it should be so; but in point of *quantity*, it is our decided conviction that no considerable increase would be the result of the burthensome apparatus which the project calls for; and that no adequate improvement would be effected in the people, in point either of knowledge, morals, or religion.

But, while the benefit that the measure promises, is matter of hypothesis, the mischief that it would entail is positive and certain. On this part of the subject we cannot do better than transcribe the following very forcible 'observations' from the pamphlet mentioned at the head of this article, and add our strong recommendation of it to the attention of our readers.

'The provisions in the clauses affecting to protect the interests of the Dissenters, are very specious, but we will endeavour to shew that the practical effect of the whole plan will be most mischievous.

'That measure is essentially bad which places the interests of the poor in opposition to their duties. It is of the highest importance that even the humblest of our fellow-creatures should be encouraged to form and cherish his own religious convictions, and profess them openly, without fear of molestation; and surely that conduct is nothing short of absolute persecution that would impose obstructions, in any shape, to the free enjoyment of this inalienable right. The sufferings of the poor are sufficiently severe, without depriving them of those consolations which flow from the uninterrupted exercise of religious profession. Numerous are the hardships, even in this land of liberty, and in the nineteenth century, which the poor, in country villages, frequently endure for conscience sake. A Dissenting meeting-house, or school, upon the British, or Sunday School system, is perhaps established. The pious labourer is conscientiously desirous of attending the worship of the one, and of sending his children for instruction to the other. In doing so, he incurs the displeasure of his clergyman, whose intimacy perhaps with the wealthy of the neighbourhood renders his power more formidable. Their countenance is withdrawn,—his employment is endangered, and sometimes lost.—Parochial relief, should he require it, is with difficulty obtained, or altogether withheld.—From participation in village charities, his family is excluded, and all these injuries he sustains, because, acting as an honest man, he obeys the dictates of religious conviction. Cases of this kind frequently occur in every county, and some have taken place within the writer's own knowledge. In a populous parish in London, an attempt was lately made to withhold parochial relief from a family because the children attended the British and not the

National School; and in a large village near the Metropolis, *where the clergyman is the magistrate*, the poor have been threatened with similar privations for this offence. Not long since, several boys were actually dismissed from a National School, because the parents, after taking them to attend the regular worship of the Established Church on the Sunday, sent their children in the evening to a Dissenting meeting-house. In the immediate vicinity of town, a subscription was not long since raised for supplying bread to the necessitous families resident in the village; and, on the suggestion of the Rector, the parents whose children attended the Dissenting meeting and Sunday School, were to be excluded from the benefit. The proposal, having been made in an opulent village, the residence of persons of several religious denominations, was over-ruled; but, had the circumstance occurred in an obscure place, there is little doubt but that its injustice must have been endured.

‘But it may be said, “In what respect will this Bill increase the clergyman’s power of exercising oppression?”—Simply thus:—The first effect of the measure will be to reduce materially the number of Schools now in existence, supported by voluntary contributions. In a village, for instance, in which is already a Day School, on the British plan, and a Sunday School, such schools will, after the passing of this Act, be no longer considered necessary by the supporters, who, deceived as to the real effect of the schools to be established, and compelled to contribute to their maintenance, will withdraw their voluntary subscriptions. The Dissenter residing in such a village has no alternative: he must send his child to the “established” school, or deprive him of education. There are many evils to which both parent and child will be exposed, which the Act does not contemplate, and which would not come within the cognizance of the Ordinary, or Dignitary of the Diocese. The parish Minister has, under certain rules, the power of sending children gratuitously to the school: these free admissions he may choose to confine to the children of Churchmen. He has the right of examining the children at the School. He is also authorized to give his sanction to the introduction of any book of religion which he may think proper. It is perfectly well known, what bearing these examinations and the instruction from such books may be made to produce on the child’s religious belief. For these grievances, besides many others, the parent has no remedy: but let us imagine a very possible case—an instance of *gross* aggression, such as would constitute a violation of the Act. Suppose the corporal punishment of a child for refusing to learn the catechism, or attend the parish church. What is the legal course for the parent to adopt? He applies, in the first place, to the parish Minister, who may be the author of the oppression: from him, therefore, he can expect no redress. His legal remedy is then to appeal to the Ordinary, who may, says the Act, “*from time to time as he shall see fit*, visit such school either by himself in person, or by directing” the Archdeacon, Chancellor, Dean, &c. &c. to do so. It is not intended to convey any reflection on the office of Ordinary, or on the character of those gentlemen who fill it, when we venture to suspect, that the cases would not be very numerous where the Ordinary would “*see*

fit to make a formal visitation, or hold a visitation of the Dignitaries of the Diocese, on the petition of an humble and obscure village labourer, complaining of the conduct of his parish Minister. *Observe, there are no means of redress whatever, should the Ordinary refuse or neglect to institute inquiry*; but let us admit, for the sake of argument, what is not very likely to occur, that investigation would always follow complaint, and that it as uniformly terminated in favour of the villager. Is the contest in no way likely to be injurious to his interests? Will he be in the same situation—will he reside with the same advantages in his village, enjoying the favour of the clergyman and the opulent of the neighbourhood, on whom probably depend his employment, and the subsistence of his family? No. Such a contention would be ruinous. This right of appeal, then, to the Ordinary—the only legal remedy which the Bill provides—would produce one of two effects. If exercised, it could scarcely fail materially to injure the appellant: Or it would induce the poor man to suffer oppression, and violate his conscience, rather than reduce himself and family to beggary, by attempting to gain redress. It is always painful to be obliged to speak in terms of distrust of any general order of men, and particularly of a body like the clergy, among whom are so many bright examples of piety, learning, and benevolence. It is admitted that the objections now urged, are founded on the conviction that the power extended will be abused; but this mode of reasoning is fully justified by the prevailing disposition of the clergy, to visit non-conformity with their displeasure; by the increase of influence which the present Bill proposes to give them, and the absence of any adequate check to prevent or redress its abuse.' pp. 18—22.

'The Dissenters therefore earnestly object to, and protest against, the Bill:

'1. Because they are convinced that by discouraging the exertions of the public; by impeding the progress of every plan for promoting education now in active operation; by neglecting to call forth the energies of the poor; and by omitting the use of those means which are absolutely necessary to ensure the instruction of the most indigent classes; this Bill will not only fail to realize the hopes it holds forth, but will retard the very object for which it is enacted.

'2. Because, by imposing a tax for the support of the schools to be established, it will prove practically oppressive to those who desire to promote universal instruction, as they must maintain other schools for children whom this Bill will not benefit, viz.—a large proportion of the most indigent of the population; those who can receive education by means of Sunday Schools only; and others who may be driven from the "established" schools by mismanagement and oppression.

'3. Because, while it commits the proposed schools to the sole management of the Clergy and Dignitaries of the Established Church, to the entire exclusion of the public at large, it provides no adequate check on the undue exercise of the power thus granted; which power, experience justifies the Dissenter in apprehending will be a dangerous instrument, liable to much abuse, and calculated to raise greater ob-

stacles to the general end, than the advantages which it can possibly afford, will counterbalance.

‘4. Because it will prove injurious to the interests of religious liberty, by adding to the number of those civil disabilities under which Dissenters from the Church Establishment at present labour; thereby recognizing and legislating upon a principle which is the basis of all religious persecution, and which Christianity and enlightened policy unite to condemn.’ pp. 27, 28.

Should Mr. Brougham either affect not to perceive the force of these objections, or, through any mistaken notion of policy or of consistency, refuse to defer to them, he is not the man the country has taken him to be. But whom, in turning his back on his old friends and his old principles, would he hope to please or conciliate? His Bill, in its present shape, by no means comes up to the wishes of the Nationalists, nor will he find it easy to satisfy the claims of the clergy. The Churchman still complains that the Church should be required to meet the Dissenters half way, and that *his* party, ‘whose alliance is courted because they *pay* in the proportion of three to one, should *sacrifice* equally ‘with the Dissenters.’ This *equal* sacrifice is imagined to consist in the exclusion of the collects from the public worship of the school; the prohibition of catechetical instruction on more than one week-day,—which is described as the ‘most direct and monstrous infringement of the existing rights, and privileges, and ‘duties of the clergy, which has yet been conceived by modern ‘innovation and liberality;’ and the permission conceded to parents indiscriminately to withdraw their children whenever the Liturgy and Church Catechism are taught. This sacrifice, however, on the part of the Church, if such it be, is contemptible as a boon. The Dissenters in general—at least a large majority of them, would consider it as no objection, that the Church collects should form a part of the daily worship: on the contrary, they would, we think, much prefer the universal use of them in their own schools to the meagre recital of the Lord’s Prayer. Mr. Brougham’s Socinian friends have on this point egregiously misled him. And as to the other grounds of objection taken by the Churchman, the National Schools as at present constituted, interfere with the interests of Dissenters much less than the Parish Schools would do with such invidious rules and nugatory concessions. *Dissenters require no sacrifices from the Church:* they ask for neither favour nor compromise. They are willing still to bear the whole expense of maintaining their own ministers, erecting their own edifices for public worship, educating their own children, and providing a cheap means of elementary instruction for all classes indiscriminately in their Sunday Schools. And all that they ask in return, is, to be protected by the Legislature from fresh exactions and fresh insults,

and not to have the promotion of Education made a pretext for an extension of the Test Act, and for levying a vexatious rate that shall compel their contributions to parochial institutions over which they can have no control, and from which they will derive no benefit.

Dr. Butler's Letter refers to certain clauses in Mr. Brougham's Bill 'for improving the administration of Endowments,' and is occupied in shewing that his scheme of converting Grammar Schools into Schools for teaching English reading, writing and accounts,—in other words, Parish Schools, would frustrate the intention of the Founders, and be a serious injury to the cause of learning. Dr. Butler writes well, and argues soundly. There is no fear that his voice will not be heard. There are scholars and gentlemen enough in the British Senate to secure from invasion the rights of learning, if not the rights of conscience. There was a time when the English Dissenters would have felt their interests equally secure in the hands of senators allied to them, not by party, but by conscientious principle, and not less competent than zealous to defend them. Dissent, except in the equivocal form of Socinianism, has long disappeared from among the higher classes; but the steady adherence of the Whigs to the grand principles of constitutional liberty, civil and religious, has hitherto commanded the attachment, and merited the confidence of that large portion of the nation who recognise those principles as their only safeguard. But this attachment is not to the men: it is an allegiance to the cause. Mr. Brougham may cheaply estimate the support, as he may despise the creed, of those he would term Sectaries and Methodists. But we earnestly recommend him to pause before he makes a deliberate sacrifice of their interests and his own principles. Should he persevere, we cannot but believe that he will draw down the rebukes of his own political friends: for how can they yield him their support, without such a virtual dereliction of their most distinguishing principles as would involve a forfeiture of character, and leave them, deserted by the nation, a powerless and disappointed faction?